

Mr. MILLER'S

S E R M O N

OF THE DEATH OF

GENERAL WASHINGTON:

A
SERMON,
Delivered December 29, 1799;
OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF
GENERAL
GEORGE WASHINGTON,
LATE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
AND
COMMANDER IN CHIEF
OF THE
AMERICAN ARMIES.

By **SAMUEL MILLER, A. M.**
One of the Ministers of the United Presbyterian Churches in the
City of New-York.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author has been informed, by a friend, that a sermon, published by the Rev. Dr. **ERSKINE**, of Edinburgh, preached on occasion of the death of the late Dr. **WILLIAM ROBERTSON**, and on the same text, has some coincidence in its plan with the following discourse. He mentions this coincidence not with the view of suggesting a comparison between any performance of that venerable and distinguished Divine and a small hasty production of his own, which only became an object of attention from its subject; but merely to give himself an opportunity of obviating suspicion, by declaring, which he does most explicitly, that he had never seen Dr. **ERSKINE**'s discourse, nor heard a syllable of its plan or contents, until after the following was delivered, and the larger part of it transcribed and sent to the Printer.

A

SERMON, &c.

I CHRONICLES xxix. 12.

—And in thine hand it is to make great.

GREATNESS is a relative term. It is used in different senses, according to the object to which it is applied. When applied to material objects, it is intended to express large extent, or magnitude. When used with reference to the human character, or in any intellectual or moral sense, it has a figurative meaning, and implies distinguished power, dignity, or excellence. In comparison with the infinite and eternal God, no created being can be called great. In his glorious presence the highest angels veil their faces, and are chargeable with comparative folly. Much less, with reference to him, can any appellation of this kind be applied to man—a being lower than the angelic hosts—a worm of the dust, who, before Jehoyah, must confess himself to be *nothing, and less than nothing, and vanity*. But comparing one race of creatures with another; or, more particularly, comparing individuals of mankind with their fellow men, we

may, without impropriety, speak of them as great or good, when, of the limited portion of excellence of which their nature admits, they possess an uncommon share. For this use of terms we have the example of many passages of scripture, and especially of that which is now under consideration.

David, the servant of God, was equally distinguished as a monarch and a saint. His zeal for the worship of God led him to conceive the plan of erecting a splendid temple to his name: and, although he was not permitted to execute this plan himself, nor to see it accomplished in his day; yet, in conformity to the divine direction, he made large preparation for it before his death, and placed the business in such a train as rendered the execution of it a more easy task for his son and successor. In making this preparation, the king contributed largely of his own property; and, after having done so, to the extent of his ability, he called upon the great men and princes of the land to do the same. They complied with his request, with a degree of promptitude, willingness, and liberality, which evinced that they possessed a large portion of the same spirit which animated their master. It was on receiving this liberal contribution from the princes of the land, that David offered up to God the humble and grateful acknowledgments of which our text is a part. *Thine, O Lord,* says he, *is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty. Both riches and honours come of thee; and in thine hand is power and might; and*

in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

It would be easy to shew, in the spirit of our text, that every species of greatness, whether in the natural, moral, or political world, comes from God. But instead of entering on this wide field, I shall confine myself to the consideration of that greatness which is sometimes bestowed on man. It shall, therefore, be my object, in the present discourse, to shew, **THAT WHEN ANY OF THE CHILDREN OF MEN BECOME GREAT, IT IS GOD WHO MAKES THEM SO;** and then to apply the subject to that **ILLUSTRIOUS CHARACTER**, for the loss of whom our country mourns.

The general truth of the proposition contained in our text will not, I presume, be disputed by any who are now present. To a christian audience it cannot be necessary to prove, that God is the source of all existence, the giver of every faculty, and the author of all promotion. *He made us, and not we ourselves, and the inspiration of the Almighty gave us understanding. He doth his will and pleasure in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is the Judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* Instead, therefore, of dwelling on these plain and elementary principles of religion—instead of going about formally to prove, that God is the source of all human greatness, which an assembly of believers can never, for a moment, doubt; I shall rather

request your attention, while I endeavour to point out some of the various *methods* in which he makes men great, and the *means* by which he ordinarily accomplishes their exaltation.

As human greatness is of different kinds, and appears under a variety of aspects; so the means which infinite Wisdom uses to raise men to it are also different. Sometimes *his path*, with respect to them, *is in the deep waters, and his footsteps are not known*. At other times his manner of conducting their advancement is more perceptible and plain. Let us humbly attempt to take such a view of some of these methods, as may lead us more diligently to study, and more devoutly to admire the ways of Providence.

I. God sometimes makes men great, by *confer-ring upon them the advantage of distinguished and honourable birth*. This we are particularly led to notice by our context. For we there learn, that the liberality which the royal Psalmist acknowledges in the passage before us, was displayed by *the Chiefs of the Fathers*, and by *the Princes of the tribes of Israel*. Those distinctions of birth which are founded upon an *hereditary nobility*, and upon the system of *privileged orders*, in general, are happily unknown in our land. I say happily, because whatever advantages such distinctions may be supposed by some to produce, they are generally acknowledged to be also productive of multiplied curses, wherever they exist. To be descended from the truly great, and the really virtuous, is, indeed,

an honour; but to be able to claim a descent from those whose elevation is merely artificial and titular, is an honour only in the estimation of frivolous minds. In fact, such nominal exaltation, when considered alone, is so far from shedding a real glory around the character to which it belongs, that it rather serves to render littleness more contemptible, and frailty or vice more odious. Still, however, God has been pleased to permit, in the arrangements of human society, that birth should be the foundation of one species of eminence. And where this eminence is wisely improved, like every other dispensation of Providence, it may be made an instrument of accomplishing much good, both to the possessor and to the world.

When, therefore, the Creator brings men into existence with this distinction, and under these advantages, he may be said to make them great, because he places them in a conspicuous and responsible situation. He gives them a weight in society, in addition to that arising from their personal dignity, which they are bound to use for his glory and the general happiness. In proportion as they are raised above their fellow men, their means of usefulness become more numerous and extended; their virtues become more precious, from the force of elevated example; their vices more poisonous, from the alluring form in which they are exhibited; and their whole character more important and operative in its relations, by means of the artificial power with which it is invested.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that this is the lowest kind of greatness with which human beings can be endowed; not only because it is merely nominal; but also, and chiefly, because it may, in general, be said to be less connected than any other with personal excellence. It is an elevation of which the wise and the foolish, the righteous and the wicked are equally made to partake; and, therefore, is of such a nature, as that, while it lays those who possess it under peculiar and solemn obligations, it takes away all pretext of glorying in themselves.

II. God sometimes makes men great, *by giving them a large portion of this world's goods*. It is an old, and a just maxim, that "wealth is power." It gives those who possess it an importance in society, and a capacity for usefulness, which, when properly improved, are inestimably precious. When God makes men rich, he places them in a high station. He gives them an influence over their fellow men. He furnishes them with the means of promoting happiness on an extensive scale. It was doubtless this, among other species of greatness, which the Psalmist had in view in uttering the words of our text. *The chiefs of the fathers, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, were great by reason of their riches as well as their honours*. It was on account of this distinction that their pious monarch called upon them to *honour the Lord with their substance*; and it was, probably, with reference to them, that he acknowledged the hand of

God in *making great*, and in *giving strength* unto men.

When, therefore, the Supreme Disposer of all things bestows on any of our race a large share of this world's goods, he may be said to make them great, provided he also bestow upon them an heart to use his gifts with a noble generosity. For, let it be remembered, that mere wealth, without a disposition to make that use of it which its Giver designed, does not constitute greatness in the estimation of the wise and the good. On the contrary, the rich miser is, of all characters upon earth, and in the view both of God and man, among the most despicable and mean. There is a littleness in his character to which the most impoverished savage is incapable of sinking. It is only to those who have joined to wealth, a benevolent and generous spirit, that the true elevation resulting from property belongs. There seems to be an allusion to this principle in the prayer of David before us. It is probable, that in calling the princes and chief men of the land great, he had a respect, not only to the extent of their possessions, but also to that noble elevation of mind which had prompted them to dedicate a large portion of their wealth to the worship and glory of their Almighty Benefactor.

III. God makes men great, in a still higher sense, by *bestowing upon them distinguished intellectual talents*. By his powers of intelligence and reason, man is raised above the brutal tribes. By his capacity of comparing, distinguishing, and com-

bining ideas, and of knowing, serving, and enjoying God, *he is placed a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour.* The smallest portion of this intellectual power has a degree of dignity and greatness annexed to it, which far exceed all the splendours of material magnificence. When we compare mind with body, or mental activity with mere inert matter, the former claims a superiority of the highest and most important kind.

But, as our Creator has formed different orders of intelligent beings, so he has made beings of the same order to differ among themselves. To some he has given small talents; to others greater and more powerful. On those whom he designs to employ in conspicuous stations, and to make the instruments of extensive good to the world, he usually confers talents of a peculiar and distinguished kind. He causes them to possess, in an eminent degree, acuteness of perception, ingenuity of combination, force of reasoning, and accuracy and soundness of judgment. These exalted minds receive and deserve the name of great, because their powers and their activity are extended. They have enlarged and comprehensive views. They are capable of great undertakings. They are qualified to achieve sublime enterprizes. To them, in general, belong the deep investigations, the splendid discoveries, and the wise improvements, which adorn and elevate the character of man. And to them pertains the high prerogative of being studied and

admired by millions who never saw their faces in the flesh; and of entertaining and enlightening, by the efforts of their genius, distant nations and ages.

It ought, however, to be observed, and to be born in mind, that true greatness does not consist so much in *brilliancy of talents*, as in *solidity, strength, and perseverance* of intellectual character. It is not the rapid and noisy stream, but the deep, majestic, and solemn, which carries all before it. It is not the dazzling meteor, which astonishes by the velocity of its movements, and affrights by the glare and the sound of its coruscations; but it is the steady, serene, and regularly revolving luminary, that enlightens the world. Who that reads the memoirs of a *Sully* will not pronounce him to have been a far greater man than *Servin*, that prodigy, and even monster of talents, whose character he has recorded. The powers of the latter, indeed, were splendid to a degree little short of miraculous; but they were perverted, prostituted, and useless to the world. But the genius of the former, sublime in its views, practical in its tendency, and persevering in its exertions, was continually planning and executing the noblest enterprizes; and thus was made the instrument of dispensing countless blessings to his country, and to mankind.

IV. God makes men great, *by producing occasions, and disposing events in such a manner as to call forth and display their talents*. It is an old and familiar maxim, that “occasions make men.” If by this maxim be meant, that a fortuitous concurrence of

causes, without the interference of any designing agent, creates and raises up distinguished characters, it is undoubtedly a sentiment replete with impiety. But if it be understood to mean, that the Governor of the universe makes use of great and interesting occasions, to rouse, to expand, and to exhibit the faculties which he has bestowed, there is every reason to suppose, both on the principles of philosophy and religion, that the maxim is just.

It is certainly true, that in order to make a great figure on the political, military, or scientific stage, there must be preparatory circumstances, happy occasions, and a favourable coincidence of events. What would all the learning and wisdom of the most profound civilian avail him or the world, if no opportunity were afforded him of putting them in practice, or of bringing them, by some means, into public view? How could the most splendid martial talents raise the character of their possessor, if his lot were cast in a season of tranquillity and peace? In such a case they must terminate in abortive wishes, and useless designs. Great powers can only be displayed when great exigencies present a field on which they can act. Now great exigencies can happen but seldom; and, therefore, those qualities which are most worthy of being admired and esteemed by mankind, often lie hidden, like the treasures of the undiscovered mine. The foot passes over the golden cavern, as upon common ground, until necessity or accident breaks it open, and discloses its precious riches. Hence

there can be little doubt, but that multitudes, whose lives have glided away in an useless tenor of sloth and obscurity, might have been highly distinguished, and eminently useful, if an opportunity had presented for the exertion of their powers.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

When God, therefore, designs to raise up a great man, he disposes occasions and incidents in a proper train for the purpose. He makes these incidents to operate on the mind of the future hero; and the mind of the hero again, by a kind of moral re-action, to give increasing greatness and interest to the scenes in which he participates. Hence both may be said, at least in certain stages of their progress, mutually to stand in the relation of cause and effect to each other. Thus, the age in which men are brought into the world, the circumstances of their education, the company into which they are thrown, and the events which daily take place around them, may all contribute to form and strengthen the mind. They may, and doubtless do, frequently operate as so many causes to generate talents, to give the taste and views an elevated direction, and to impart dignity and energy to the whole character.

Who that reads the history of *Alexander*, does not see that, humanly speaking, he would have

lived and died unknown, beyond the bounds of a small district, had not the achievements of his father *Philip*, and the lessons of his preceptor *Aristotle*, fired his ambition; and had not the divisions and the weakness of Persia presented an easy road to conquest and glory? Who that traces the career of the emperor *Justinian*, from the rank of a private soldier, till he ascended the imperial throne, can refrain from admiring the mysterious ways of Providence, or can doubt, for a moment, that promotion is affected by the power of the Most High? Had God cast the lot of the illustrious *Charles* of Germany in other times, or in a different sphere; had other princes sat upon the neighbouring thrones; or had the period of his reign been less distracted and critical, would he not, in all probability, have fallen silently and unnoticed down the stream of time? Nay, to mention a still more striking and familiar instance, had the noble enthusiasm in favour of American Independence burst forth but half a century earlier or later; or had our glorious emancipation from Britain been accomplished without recurring to arms; is there not every reason to believe, that the GREAT MAN, whose death we deplore, and whose memory is embalmed in the hearts of a grateful people, would have been, to the end of his life, nothing more than a respectable farmer in Virginia?

But God ~~not~~ only uses great and splendid occasions, as means of conducting men to eminence. In his hands the finallest are sometimes made produc-

tive of similar effects. Dispensations of Providence which, at first view, appear trifling, often decide the pursuits in which men engage; and these pursuits are made, by the same infinite wisdom, to disclose the latent energies of the soul; to stimulate into action the languid powers; to awaken a genius, which, without such events, might have slumbered for ever. If we trace the career of some of the greatest men who have ever lived, we shall find, that they were raised by unexpected means to eminence; and that events, apparently small, were made to accomplish their exaltation. How often has an accidental interview, of which no consequences were foreseen;—a passing civility, by which nothing extraordinary was intended;—or a matrimonial alliance, from which no material advantage was expected;—how often have trivial events of this kind led to the advancement of men, from private life, to the throne of empire, and to the command of millions!—Who that calculated on the principles of human wisdom, could have foreseen, that a little domestic discord would prove the first link in a chain of causes, to advance *Joseph* from obscure retirement to the station of chief ruler over the land of Egypt? Who that followed the stripling *David*, when sent by his father on a humble errand to the Israelitish army, would have imagined, that this youthful shepherd was to be led, by such a transient visit, to become the deliverer of his countrymen from the proud Philistines, and afterwards an ornament of the Jewish throne?

And, to descend to more modern times, how singular and unforeseen the means by which the great *William*, whom Britain stiles her *deliverer*, gained the sovereign power of that kingdom! And how small, and apparently unimportant, the incidents by which the Empress *Catharine* rose, from the lowest poverty, to wield the sceptre of the *Russias*! These, and a thousand similar instances of daily occurrence, prove, that in the hands of God, not only *weak things of the world can be made to confound the mighty, and foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and things that are not, to bring to nought things which are*; but also, that instruments the most feeble, and circumstances scarcely thought worthy of notice, can be made to inspire with wisdom, to clothe with power, and to conduct to the highest celebrity and honour.

V. God makes men great, by *giving them the affections and the confidence of their fellow men*. A man may be endowed with great talents—may be enriched with large possessions—and may be called to act a conspicuous part on the stage of human life, and yet be considerably defective in some of the attributes of greatness. If he cannot obtain the respect and attachment of those around him, he fails in an important point. “The perfection of “glory,” says a great and admired heathen,* “consists in these three particulars, that the people “love us, that they have confidence in us, and

“that being affected with a certain admiration towards us, they think we deserve to be honoured.” Though this sentiment proceeds upon principles in some degree erroneous, and, therefore, cannot be adopted, in all its extent, by a christian, yet it doubtless contains a mixture of truth. To attain the veneration and love of our fellow men, is an important ingredient in earthly greatness. It is true, indeed, that some of the greatest and best men who have ever lived, were, almost wholly, destitute of it; but would they not, probably, have been greater and more useful had they possessed this hold on surrounding minds? Reputation, in a still higher sense than wealth, is power; and a kind of power highly desirable, whether we have a respect to our own happiness, or to the efficacy of our services to others. *A good name, says Solomon, is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver or gold.*

Accordingly, when it is the will of God to make a man great, or an instrument of doing extensive good to the world, he usually gives him the hearts and the confidence of those around him. He so orders events, that his actions shall appear in a wise and dignified point of light, and so controuls the affections of men, that they shall view all his conduct through a favourable medium. This popularity, when duly improved, has the best effects. It is useful to those who possess it. It is, at once, a guard to virtue, and an excitement to duty. A consciousness that the eyes of the world were di-

acted toward them, and the confidence of the world reposed in them, has animated the patriot—has fired the hero—and has given rise to some of the most splendid and useful enterprizes that were ever achieved. But public confidence, while it frequently produces happy effects on those who possess it, is still more important with reference to their usefulness in the world. The sphere of their influence is enlarged, in proportion to the degree in which they enjoy the good opinion of the community in which they reside. Men listen with a willing ear, and with favourable prepossessions, to a teacher whom they honour. Their affectionate attachment adds weight to his example, and gives authority to his counsel. Hence his exertions to do them good are more effectual than those of others, because they enter with readiness into the spirit of his plans, and cheerfully co-operate with him in his benevolent labours.—Seldom has any people seen a more illustrious instance than we have witnessed, of the influence of a BELOVED NAME on the public mind. We have seen it unite the affections and the counsels of those who would, in all probability, have been otherwise divided. We have seen it, more efficacious than the exertions of official power, repress the murmurings, calm the fears, and conciliate the confidence of the discordant and desponding in the most trying times.

VI. Lastly, God makes men great, *by adorning their hearts with virtue and holiness*. This is the topstone of the edifice of human promotion, with-

out which the whole structure is imperfect. Let a man possess all the talents, the wealth, and the honours which a human being can enjoy, or which a grateful people can bestow; yet if his bosom do not expand with benevolence, and his heart do not reflect the moral image of his Creator, *Tekel* must be written upon all his greatness. What the light and the genial warmth of the sun are to the natural world, *the beauty of holiness* is to the soul. It sheds a glory over all the faculties of man. It forms that *divinity of nature* which renders rational beings like God; and which constitutes their fitness for the pure joys of his presence.

It must be allowed, indeed, that many of those whom the world has called great, and who, in some respects, deserved the name, have been destitute of this most noble of all distinctions. Their ambition was wholly selfish. Their views, though comprehensive, were terminated by the present state. Their activity was rather a curse than a blessing to mankind. The characters of the most mighty conquerors, when viewed through a proper medium, exhibit a degree of moral debasement, from which humanity, to say nothing of religion, turns away with abhorrence and shame. The utmost wish of that great heart, for which the whole earth did not afford sufficient objects of conquest, was, after all, to be praised by the Athenians. And the *Cæsars* and *Pompeys* of our race have waded to glory through the tears and the blood of their fellow men.

But when the Supreme Disposer of all things designs to raise men to the highest pinnacle of greatness, he adds to every other species of elevation that sublimity of virtue which sanctifies talents; that disinterested benevolence which gives a dignity to the character; and that transformation of the whole man into the image of God, which raises the soul from earth to heaven. Man never appears in so truly noble and honourable a point of view, as when his faculties are directed to their proper objects, and all his powers consecrated to the divine work of *doing good*. The hero in virtue is as much superior to the hero in conquest as the heavens are higher than the earth, or as light excelleth darkness. How little did a *Darius*, an *Agrippa*, and a *Nero*, appear in comparison with a DANIEL and a PAUL, even when these holy men were standing in bonds before them! How much does the character of an HOWARD rise above the most powerful monarch, or the most renowned destroyer of his species, in all his glory! To devise and execute plans for lessening the miseries, and promoting the happiness of man, was *his meat and his drink*. For him no tears flowed but the tears of gratitude and love. For him the lips of the widow, the fatherless, and the prisoner, were opened in secret benediction. And future generations shall rise up and call him blessed.

Such is the greatness of him whose understanding is enlightened with divine knowledge, and whose heart is warmed with holy love. His talents are no longer devoted to the narrow plans of

selfishness, but move in a wider sphere, and command a more extensive horizon. His ambition, lately confined to temporal aggrandisement, now takes an higher aim. Instead of temporal wealth and honours, he seeks heavenly treasures, the approbation of God, and the honour of advancing his glory. Instead of thirsting after conquest and destruction, his bosom is animated with the noble desire of promoting universal happiness. His benevolence, no longer bounded by names or territory, embraces the whole family of God. His hopes, instead of terminating in the pursuits of earth, rise to the most noble, sublime, and excellent objects in the universe. And his enlarged soul can now be satisfied with nothing, as his supreme good, but infinite excellence, and *an eternal weight of glory*.

I have thus attempted, brethren, to lay before you a brief sketch of some of the various means by which God raises men to distinction and greatness. To fill up the outline which has been given, by a more particular recurrence to details and instances, must be left to your own meditations. In the mean time, I would request your attention to a few of the numerous practical lessons which this subject suggests to the serious mind. The following are obvious and important:

1. If the doctrine which has been delivered be just, then great men have no reason to glory in themselves; nor are others at liberty to set them up as idols. *Who made them to differ from others?*

*and what have they that they did not receive? If, therefore, they have received all they possess, why should they glory as if they had not received it? The truth is, the doctrine of our total dependence on God, for our existence, and for every power and enjoyment connected with it, removes, at one stroke, all ground of pride and self-confidence in man. The most ingenious, honourable, and exalted, are nothing more than JEHOVAH's instruments: and, therefore, to HIM is ultimately due all the honour of their great and good actions. In contemplating, then, the virtues and services of distinguished men, it becomes us to adopt the language of the inspired Psalmist: *From thee, O Lord, both riches and honours come; and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory!**

2. Is it true that it belongs to God to make great? Then when those who have been raised to high distinction, and made eminently useful in the world, are taken away, we are taught, by this doctrine, not to indulge in anxiety or despair. The same God who raised them up, who girded them with strength, who inspired them with wisdom, and who fitted them for the sphere in which they moved, still lives, and will forever live. He can qualify others, at his pleasure, to take their places, and to act in the various exigencies which may arise. For every crisis which occurs in human affairs, he has his infinitely wise plan laid, and his instruments

prepared, to do his will, in every part of the scene. And from even stocks and stones he can raise up agents to accomplish his purposes. Brethren, how consoling the thought that we live under the government of such a God! What though the objects of our admiration and love be taken away? What though instruments on which our hopes were placed, be unexpectedly removed from the stage? *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof!*

3. If the view which has been given of this subject be just, then how awfully responsible is the situation of those whom God has made great!* *Unto whomsoever much is given, of them will much be required; and to whom God has committed much, of them will he ask the more.* I speak to all such within my hearing—to the rich, the ingenious, the learned, and the honourable. Ye great ones of the earth! your Creator has made you eminent among men. He has put into your hands many talents. He has given you a weight in society, and an influence over those around you, which enable you to do extensive good, and to bring a large sum of glory to his name. And let me remind you, that for the use which you make of all these advantages, *he will bring you into judgment.* What improvement, then, are you making of your distinctions and your talents? Dreadful, indeed, will be your reckon-

* This inference, though in the original copy, was omitted in delivering the discourse, as were several preceding and subsequent paragraphs, for want of time.

ing, if you be found, either to have buried them in sloth and inaction, or to have perverted them to the unhallowed purposes of sin. In such a case, better had it been for you to creep through life with the most obscure and mean of your species; or rather that *you had never been born*. Be intreated, then, to consider the design for which you were raised to eminence, and the obligations which it lays upon you. Study to be great in virtue, in holiness, in zeal for the glory of God and the public good, as well as in the objects of temporal pursuit. Thus will your elevation prove a blessing to yourselves and to mankind. Thus will the transient honours of earth be but introductory to higher honours—to the sceptres and thrones of glory reserved for the just, in *a better country, that is, an heavenly*.

4. This subject teaches us to honour those whom God makes the instruments of great good to the world: When he honours them, it is our duty to do the same: and if, in doing this, we act under the impression, and upon the principle, that they are his instruments, we ultimately glorify him thereby.

And here permit me to apply the subject on which we have been meditating, to the character of that ILLUSTRIOUS MAN, on account of whose death the emblem of sorrow shrouds this sacred desk, and for the loss of whom we behold the singular spectacle of a nation mourning.

It is not my intention, brethren, to subject you

to the pain of hearing the language of servility and adulation with respect to this venerable Personage. To say nothing of other considerations, such language would be peculiarly inconsistent and unreasonable after the doctrine which has been delivered. But I trust it will be unnecessary to prove, before this audience, that we are called, in duty, to take a particular notice of this solemn dispensation of Providence. It is our happiness, and our boast, that we live under a government in which the voice of the people is the supreme law; and, therefore, the approbation and applause of this voice, should be offered as the reward of long and faithful services to the people. Let it never be said that republicans are ungrateful. Let us testify, by our conduct, that we perceive the difference between the ostentatious pomp and mockery of grief, which attend the demise of tyrants; and the ardent spontaneous affection with which a grateful people can cherish and honour the memory of a patriot and benefactor.

You will not consider me, in the present discourse, as attempting to draw, at full length, the character of this distinguished Man. This is a task which, as it would be too arduous, is also, happily, unnecessary. The record of his virtues and his services, is so deeply impressed on your hearts; his great actions form so splendid an object in our history; and the blessings flowing from them to his country are so numerous and extensive, that I am persuaded the feelings of your hearts, this day,

form his best eulogium. But you will indulge me while I endeavour, in a few sentences, to recal to your view some of those considerations, which demand a tribute of gratitude and respect to his memory from the American people.

Our beloved and deplored WASHINGTON was, emphatically, A MAN WHOM GOD HAD MADE GREAT. Without the tinsel ornament of titled nobility—without the advantage of what is called distinguished and honourable birth, he was raised by the Governor of the world to a degree of greatness, of which the history of man has furnished but few examples. He was not, indeed, endowed with those brilliant and dazzling talents, which many erroneously imagine to be alone estimable. His mind was of an higher order. Providence designed him to move in a sphere in which a dignified prudence, soundness of judgment, firmness, self command, and uniformity, were especially needful; and, therefore, these were the leading features of his character. With these respectable powers he entered, at an early period of life, on the career of military glory, against savage invaders; and, even then, gave the most decisive and honourable prefaces of his future greatness.*

* In the year 1755 he sustained the rank of Colonel in the Virginia forces, being then only twenty-three years of age. In this rank he accompanied Gen. Braddock in the celebrated expedition in which that officer was defeated and lost his life. On this occasion he was exposed to imminent danger, and displayed great bravery and military skill. It is said to have been owing, humanly speaking, to his advice not being followed, that the dreadful catastrophe took place. And when the Com-

When the encroachments and oppressions of Britain prompted our countrymen to throw off her yoke—when a few infant colonies rose up to contend with a gigantic, rapacious, and haughty parent, you saw him step forth, their patriotic leader, in asserting their precious rights, and in braving all the ills of a perilous and doubtful conflict. And; though little versed in the art of war; though placed at the head of a raw and undisciplined army; though contending with skilled, veteran, and more powerful foes, you saw his wisdom, his perseverance, and his valour, rise superior to the most formidable difficulties. You saw him lead on his fellow-citizens, from time to time, to conquest and triumph; until the fair fabric of Independence was completely reared over the tomb of tyranny.

To present an adequate view of the services which he rendered his country during this arduous struggle, would be to give, in detail, a principal part of the history of the revolution. His talents, as a military commander, were not so much dis-

mander in Chief had fallen, it was chiefly by his address and good conduct that the broken remains of the army were brought off the field.

A few weeks subsequent to the above-mentioned event, the Rev *Samuel Davies*, afterwards President of the College of New-Jersey, and then settled in Virginia, was called upon to preach before an independent company of volunteers, which had just been raised, and which was about to march against the same foe. In the course of his sermon he took notice, with approbation, of the martial ardour which his hearers discovered; and, afterward, when the discourse was printed, he added, in a note, the following remarkable words: "As an instance of this, I may point out to the public that heroic youth Col. WASHINGTON, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner, for some important service to his country."

played by the number or the magnitude of the battles which he won, nor by “ marching over thousands and tens of thousands who had fallen by his victorious sword ;” as by his address, in making the most of the feeble force which he led ; by preventing the effusion of blood ; by skilful diversions and movements ; by exhausting the strength of his foes ; by wise delay, and avoiding decisive actions, where they could only be hurtful ; by concealing the weakness of his army, not only from his opponents, but from his own soldiery themselves ; and, finally, by availing himself, with admirable discernment, of seasons and opportunities to make an effectual impression on the enemy. The rash and unthinking, who estimate the talents of a general only by the multitudes he has destroyed, the cities he has sacked, and the extent of the devastation which he has produced, may be ready to imagine that such a picture affords little evidence of a high military character. But the sober and reflecting, who consider his peculiar situation, the small extent of his resources, and the formidable difficulties with which he had to contend, will, without hesitation, pronounce the Leader of our revolutionary army one of the most respectable commanders of ancient or modern times.

You will not understand me as intending to ascribe to this favourite Hero all the honour of effecting our deliverance from a foreign yoke. Many illustrious men, no doubt, shared largely with him in the burdens and the honours of those trying

times. But his pre-eminent services in accomplishing our glorious revolution, have been universally acknowledged, and have long been the theme of wonder and eulogium in both hemispheres. Who was it that, under God, encouraged our suffering army, raised their drooping spirits, and cemented their affections and their strength, in the most gloomy crises? Who was it that, by his prudence and his fortitude, eluded the snares which were laid for his feeble hands, and conducted them, by unexpected means, to victory and glory? Ye patriots of seventy-six and seventy-seven! Ye who witnessed the hardships, the dangers, and the disasters of that memorable period, do not your hearts, big with mighty emotions, responsive say, It was HE? Yes; under the direction of the GOD OF ARMIES, it was, indeed, HE. There was a majesty, and, I will add, if the expression may be allowed, a magic in his presence, which dispelled fear, which inspired confidence, and which commanded the veneration of enemies themselves.

When the independence of his country was established, you saw him, like Cincinnatus, retiring to his farm, and, with a magnanimity even greater than he had displayed in military achievements, exchanging the character of the soldier for that of the citizen. When the voice of his fellow-citizens again called him into public view, you saw him, obedient to their command, quitting, a second time, his beloved retirement, and putting his splendid and untarnished reputation to hazard on the

field of political conflict. It is probable that, on the day when he accepted the chair of President of the United States, no mortal ever had the applause and the admiration of so large a portion of mankind so unanimously enlisted in his favour.

With respect to the administration of our departed Friend and Father, as a civil magistrate, it is, perhaps, impossible, at present, to make up an impartial opinion. The tendencies and effects of some of his measures, posterity only can fully appreciate. That there is less unanimity among his countrymen with respect to these, than with respect to his military services, you need not to be informed. It should always, however, be remembered, that he was called to the helm of state only a short time before the gathering of a storm in the political world, which has subverted the works of ages, which still shakes Europe to its centre, and of which no one can estimate the consequences, or see the end. Many of the conjunctures in which it became his duty to decide, and to act, were eminently critical, arduous, and embarrassing. To explore the untried interests of an infant empire, and to select the safest connexions abroad, when the civilized world had, almost universally, risen in arms, was surely a task of magnitude, of peril, and of doubt. Nor is it wonderful that, at such a period, the feelings and passions of his constituents should be tremblingly alive to the impression of public measures; or that the human mind, weak,

failible, and variously modified as it is, should rush to opposite conclusions. Recollections of this kind cannot fail to soften the asperities of party, and to suggest an apology, both for the mistakes which have been imputed to the illustrious Deceased, and for the warmth of many who differed from him in opinion. And it is pleasing, and, in a high degree, honourable to his memory, to observe, that, amidst all the diversity of sentiment, and the collision of parties; amidst all the mutual accusations of foreign influence and domestic corruption, which have, unhappily, agitated our country, his integrity has remained unimpeached and unsuspected. Even those who believe his political errors to have been most numerous, have yet acknowledged, that they were the errors of a mind actuated by the purest motives, and pursuing, with undeviating rectitude of intention, the public good.

Many of those great men who have dazzled the world with the splendour of their actions, and who commenced their course with professions of unbounded attachment to liberty, have seized the first opportunity to usurp power, and have proved the worst of tyrants. The history of a *Cromwell* is the history of many deceivers and false patriots. But the MAN whose memory we delight to honour was never liable to this charge. You never saw him thrust himself forward unsolicited to public view, nor court an admission to places of trust and authority. On the contrary, he was always brought forward by the unanimous and importunate voice

of a grateful people. He availed himself of no opportunity that was presented to gratify ambition, or to promote his personal aggrandizement. He seemed to hold the commissions of his country for no other end than to do it good ; and instantly surrendered them, when the object for which they were conferred was accomplished.

Singular success, and extended fame, have been too often found to make even strong minds self-confident and vain-glorious. A successful general of antiquity, in recounting his numerous victories, when he came to speak of one distinguished above all the rest, boasted, “ In *this*, Fortune” (the imaginary deity to whom he had conceded some agency in the former instances) “ had no share.” The Hero of America furnished an example so remarkably of an opposite kind, that his magnanimity was not less displayed in his manner of bearing prosperity, and receiving applause, than in accomplishing the most important enterprizes of his public life. Neither the success of his great undertakings, nor the voice of universal praise, were found to diminish his dignified, retiring modesty, or to seduce him from the remembrance of human weakness. On the Providence of God he took every opportunity of expressing a firm reliance ; and to Divine goodness and aid he never failed of ascribing the glory of every favourable event.

Of the various kinds of greatness to which human beings aspire, you have heard that moral heroism is the most worthy of our ambition. The

laurels which virtue bestows are more precious than crowns and sceptres. *He that is slow to anger, says the wise man, is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.* But how seldom have the proud favourites of fame appeared to recognize or regard this truth! How often, perhaps it may be said, how generally, have the splendid and commanding talents of great men been joined with degrading passions, and the meanest vices! The ties of justice, of benevolence, and of gratitude have been violated, for the sake of accomplishing their magnificent but selfish plans. A decided exception to this general character is a rare phænomenon in history. You have, doubtless, gone before me in making an application of these remarks. The patriotic citizen, to whose memory we are paying this tribute of respect, furnished such an exception. His private deportment corresponded with the splendour of his public reputation. Amidst the din of arms, and the weighty cares of office, he was not unmindful of the virtues which became him as a man. His ear was ever open to the voice of humanity; and his attention to the various duties of social and relative life was dignified and exemplary.

It is not uncommon for the most distinguished heroes to end their lives in neglect and obscurity, after a high career of celebrity and honour. To the long and humiliating catalogue of the evils attendant on old age, which moral and satirical writers have given, we may generally add the diminution,

if not the total loss of fame.* But from this general law our beloved and admired Hero was in a great measure exempted. He retained the affections of his countrymen, and the admiration of the world, to the end of life. He descended to the grave full of years, loaded with honours, and covered with glory. And though his mortal part is consigned to the tomb, yet we have every day fresh reason to believe that his reputation will live, and his name be pronounced with enthusiastic ardour among distant generations.

Such was the MAN whose death we this day deplore. Citizens of America! let his memory be ever dear, and ever honoured among you. Tell to your children, and to your children's children, what great things God has accomplished, through him, for your country. Tell them of his love of liberty. Tell them of his long, faithful, and triumphant exertions to establish her standard in our land. Tell them how he lived, and how he died; that, like him, should the voice of national danger again call, they may be ready to step forth in support of their rights, and prove themselves worthy of the descent which they boast.

And you, ye youths of America! behold the example which has been this day set before you; and let a generous ambition fire your bosoms. It

* In life's last scene what prodigies surprise,
Fears of the brave, and follies of the wise!
From Marlborough's eyes the streams of dotage flow,
And Swift expires a driv'ler and a show.

would be extravagant encomium to hold up our departed CHIEF to your view as an example absolutely perfect, or to represent him as concentrating all possible excellence in his character. Such indiscriminate and excessive praise, when applied to any mortal, however it may be intended, must have the effect of satire in disguise. But he, undoubtedly, left an example, so unusually illustrious, as to furnish a fit object for your aspiring imitation. Go then, beloved youths! learn of him to consecrate your talents to the public good. Learn of him to love freedom, the birthright of man, and to be always ready to sacrifice your lives in defence of your country's rights. Learn of him to maintain that self-command, dignity, and order of conduct, which are so essential to social welfare. And, finally, learn of him to carry to the end of life, that consistent and uniform attachment to principle, for which he was so eminently distinguished.

And thou, ILLUSTRIOUS SHADE! father, friend, and benefactor, farewell! Ever will we cherish and honour thy memory. Thy virtues and thy services shall be remembered while gratitude has a place in our bosoms, and while this land continues to be the abode of freemen, who know how to estimate the value of that liberty, which has been purchased and sealed with blood. Over thy grave we promise, in dependence on the aid of Him who alone can give strength, that we will never forsake the principles for which thou hast fought, and

which animated thee to thy latest hour. While we watch, with filial affection, around thy sleeping dust, we will guard, with ever growing zeal, that fair political inheritance which was thy glory and thy joy.

Finally, my brethren, we learn from this subject, and from the solemn dispensation of Providence which we have been contemplating, what is the end of all earthly greatness.

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.*

The admired hero, and the beloved sage, notwithstanding all his greatness, must, at length, lie down in the dust. There, according to the high decree of heaven, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the honoured and the despised, must become the common food of corruption and worms. Candidates for immortality! *so number your days, that you may apply your hearts unto wisdom.* What will it avail you to receive the applause of man, *whose breath is in his nostrils*, and to be loaded with those honours which soon fade away, if, after all, you have no inheritance secured beyond this little span of existence? There is a kingdom which is *not of this world*, offered and secured to all the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. There is a glorious exaltation tendered to them, *without money, and without price*;—an exaltation in comparison

with which the objects of earthly ambition are insignificant trifles. To this felicity and glory, then, let each of us aspire. Let us seek after reconciliation with God, through the atonement of his dear Son; and a conformity to his image, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Let it be our highest ambition to *be found of him at last in peace, without spot, and blameless: that when He who is our life shall appear, we also may appear, and live and reign with him in glory, forever and ever.* AMEN!

